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49. (Three times amended) A storage system for a vehicle having a driver compartment and a cargo area disposed to the rear of the driver compartment within a contiguous enclosure, wherein the enclosure is defined by a floor, a roof, two opposing side walls which each connect the roof to the floor, and exterior side panels, wherein the cargo area includes opposing rear wheel wells extending into the cargo area from the bottom edges of the side panels,

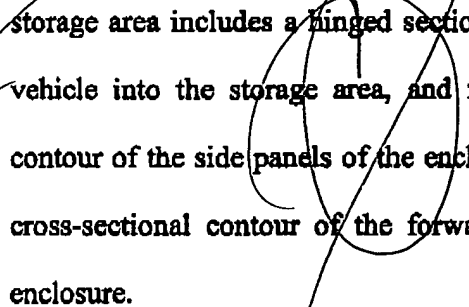
the storage system comprising

at least one storage area adjacent to and separated from the cargo area, the storage area being defined by at least a portion of an outwardly bowed exterior side panel, an inner panel, a top and bottom which connect the inner panel to the exterior side panel, and wherein the storage area extends into the cargo area no further than the wheel well extends into the cargo area, wherein at least one section of at least one of the outwardly bowed exterior side panels is hinged to provide access to the storage area therein.


61. (Four times amended) A vehicle having a forward compartment for carrying a driver, and including at least one forward side door into the forward compartment, and an enclosure for passengers, merchandise or equipment wherein the enclosure is disposed to the rear of the driver compartment, and further wherein the enclosure is bounded by exterior, contoured side panels and a rear, including at least one rear door, and optionally at least one rear side door, and wherein each side panel has a lower perimeter that includes a curve to accommodate a wheel well adjacent each side panel;

the vehicle comprising at least one storage area disposed between the rear-most one of said side doors and the rear of the vehicle, and adjacent at least one exterior, contoured side panel and extending into the enclosure of the vehicle, and wherein the side panel adjacent the

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 storage area includes a hinged section effective to provide an opening from the exterior of the vehicle into the storage area, and further wherein the separation width and cross sectional contour of the side panels of the enclosure is substantially the same as the separation width and cross-sectional contour of the forward compartment where it adjoins the side panels of the enclosure.

85. (Four times amended) A vehicle comprising a driver's compartment and a rear compartment contained within the same enclosure, the rear compartment including a storage system, the rear compartment comprising:

 a floor area bounded on either side by side panels with exterior surfaces defining the width of the rear compartment, two opposed wheel wells, one at each side of the floor panel, and wherein the side panels of the rear compartment are substantially aligned with the driver's compartment,

at least one hinged section in the exterior surface of at least one of the side panels,

at least one storage area located adjacent the at least one hinged section, and extending into a cargo area of the vehicle to an inner wall of the storage area, wherein the hinged section is configured to provide access to the storage area when the hinged section is in the open position and wherein the width of the storage area is not greater than the width of the wheel well;

a latch for retaining the at least one hinged contoured side panel section in the closed position; and

a strut for retaining the hinged section in the open position.